



**Northgate Community center and Park
PAT Meeting #6
Dec. 15, 2003
Meeting Notes**

PAT Members Present: Shawn Olesen, Frank Lufkin, Barbara Maxwell, John Cash, Marilyn Firlotte, Velve Maye, William Lowe

PAT Members Not Present: Sue Geving, LeAnn Hendrix-Barer, Michelle Rupp, Jeanne Hayden

Staff Present: Maureen A. O'Neill, NE Parks and Recreation Manager; Tim Motzer, Parks Project Manager; Joelle Ligon, Public Relations Specialist; Marcia Iwasaki, Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs; Nikki McClure, 1% For Art Community center artist

7:04 p.m. Welcome

- Tim welcomed everyone. Each team member introduced themselves.
- There were no changes to the agenda or to the Nov. 3, 2003 Meeting Notes.

7:05 p.m. Comments from Visitors

- There were no visitors.

7:06 p.m. Discussion from previous week's PAT e-mail exchange

- There were no e-mails for discussion.

7:10 p.m. Artist's presentation of alternatives

- Marcia gave a short summary of the process that got us to this point: Nikki was selected specifically for this project. She has been working with community members, as well as with Dana Lynn Lewis, who is the artist for the Library project. Nikki also has spent time working with the architect. She has come up with three to four ideas to present. She will want feedback tonight; keep in mind we can only afford one option.
- Nikki's project is scheduled to go before the Public Arts Committee on Jan. 20, 2004.
- Nikki said she had been for a walk with PAT member Jeanne Hayden. Hearing Jeanne talk about moving to the neighborhood helped Nikki prepare her art proposals. PAT member Barbara Maxwell gave Nikki a copy of the Maple Leaf Newsletter. Nikki also spent time with Cheryl Klinker of the Thornton Creek

Alliance. In addition, she went to Cloud City Coffee in the Maple Leaf Neighborhood and spent some time in order to get a feel for the community.

- Nikki said that the chosen proposal will be further defined and refined. The nuts and bolts of the design will be determined later.
- Alternative #1: "Glowing Blue Bubbles". These are a series of blue bubbles that would be placed at specific locations within the plaza area. They would be made of molded plexiglass. They would glow at night, and would lead to the entrance of the community center. These could be seen from far away. Nikki checked with some skateboarders she knows, and they said that the "Bubbles" wouldn't be good for skateboarding because of their shape. Also, in order to make sure that they didn't get scuffed or marked, the "Bubbles" would have a sort of sanded finish. Also, they would be molded without air inside, so that they wouldn't end up like a terrarium.
- Alternative #2: "The Eddy". This is a series of cut metal wave forms. The forms would be placed along the seating wall. It would be an open work so you could see the "Bubbles". Nikki would like to put clear glass and blue resin in the cut out places. There would also be text associated with this alternative. The text would be about water and its importance in our lives. Water on this planet is finite. All the water in the world is all the water there ever was or ever will be. Other text for the seating arrangement could include lines or phrases drawn from classic literature or poetry. An eddy is a backflow of water that runs against the main current. It is a sort of confluence of water moving in different directions. Nikki likened this to the way she has experienced the Northgate area.
- Alternative #3: "All the Water in the World". This piece would be placed on the plaza surface, following the trench drain already designed into the community center by The Miller | Hull Partnership. It would be a pattern in the pavement, perhaps made of aggregate materials. The pattern would lead to a drinking fountain, also already designed into the community center plaza. Around the fountain would be text in metal, flowing around the fountain. "All the water in the world is all the water that ever was or ever will be." The water would be a sort of mystical font. Rejuvenation is a theme at Northgate. This alternative would focus on how landscapes can be changed by water. The idea is that water is rejuvenating because water has the ability to transform.

- Alternative #4 “Flock Together”. This alternative would take advantage of another feature already planned for the community center. There will be a corner window at the northwest corner of the community center. This window will be 10'x17'. It will be two pieces of glass sandwiched together, and will look down into the gymnasium. The art Nikki proposes would be sandwiched between the panes of glass. This piece would be comprised of several alder trees with people and birds sitting in the trees. Nikki's inspiration was that when a landscape starts anew, the first trees to come back are alder. The trees attract birds, thus a new landscape is born. The people in the trees would be representative of those who live in Northgate. When Nikki was at Cloud City Coffee she sketched some of the people there and put them in her trees. Also, she has a list of birds that populate the area around Northgate, and they would be included in the artwork.

7:30 p.m Question and Answer between PAT and Artist

- General comments and reactions immediately following Nikki's presentation:
 - A frosted glass project at Green Lake Community center was so subtle that it disappeared.
 - Whatever art is chosen, we should choose something vibrant.
 - The PAT should choose something can be seen easily at night.
 - The cost should be in line with the budget.
 - Lighting would be good.

Roundtable discussion: each bullet represents the comments of one PAT member.

- I really liked them all. I like the elements of the “Bubbles”, especially the visibility at night. The “Bubbles” have a way of really helping with the visual aspect of the art. Usually when you're in Northgate, you experience the area from a vehicle. Boy, I wish we could do all of them. I really like the park in Licton Springs that is across the streets from the Northgate Community College. It attracts people. Can we raise funds through a Neighborhood Matching Fund? I think adopting a vision that is expandable is a good idea. I really want something you can see from the road, a beacon, something that jumps out at you.
- I like them all too. I think “Bubbles” displays the fewest of Nikki's talents. I like “The Eddy” – the flow and the connection to the low wall. “All the Water in the World” connects the flow of people too. Nikki did a great job of connecting the community with the water. “Flock Together” could be decorated throughout the

year. This is going to be here a long time. We need something that will stand the test of time. We need durability.

- “All the Water in the World”: who would maintain it? [The drinking fountain is already planned as part of the plaza.] If I had to rate my favorites, I would rate them #1: “The Eddy”, but I think it needs to be backlit; #2 “All the Water in the World”; #3 “Bubbles”, however, as a grownup, it doesn’t really attract me; #4 “Flock Together”, but it would definitely need color.
- My number one choice is “The Eddy”, followed by “Flock Together”. The window thing is real easy to do. Three-quarters of an inch is the average space between glass panes, which is plenty of room to place art in between. Glass etching can be very cool. I don’t really like the “Bubbles”, and I’m not crazy about walking on art.
- The flow of the artwork is great. I like the roundness, curves and softness. I think the “Bubbles” would take away from the effectiveness of the plaza. “All the Water in the World” would just get lost. Words on fountains tend to disappear, not literally, but to the viewer, they lose their visibility over time. I want the art to have an impact on an enduring basis. I would like to see some other kind or form of water. It would be nice to have a spout of water coming down a glass wall. Whatever we do, it should have color. The art is a statement of what you as an artist do best. I would like the color to be realistic. Also, I’d like the color to be up high, so it draws the eye upward. I would like also to see the art be functional.
- Nikki picked up on the important themes. “The Eddy” could be interactive. I like that about it.
- Every park has a signature. Any one of these could be that signature. We need something that says: this is distinctively Northgate. I think an issue with the “Bubbles” is that sometimes lights go out at night. Also, they could spray painted or etched. What material would be used in “The Eddy”? We should avoid any sharp edges. “All the Water in the World” might mean metal on the ground and that could be potentially slippery. “Flock Together” would get touched a lot. Also, people try to put flyers on glass all the time, and it’s really difficult to get that glue off glass. Sound Transit bus kiosks are good examples of how the glue creates problems.

- Joelle offered to take a photo of the YWCA public art, which has a similar theme to “Flock Together”.
- Maureen encouraged the group to make a unique choice. It should be identifiable, and give the Northgate Community enter a visual identity.
- Marcia explained that this project, as well as the Library art project, is scheduled to be presented to the Public Art Committee on Jan. 20, 2004. This committee is comprised of experienced artists who look for issues like safety, feasibility and technical considerations.
- General discussion among the PAT members:
 - I like “The Eddy”, but it should be more vertical. It’s not too tall.
 - The art should come to life with color, light and movement.
 - Let’s think in terms of what we want -- not how much money we have. We can always add different parts later. We can ask the community to contribute.
 - With the window, we’re totally committed in the sense that once the art gets sealed inside, there’s no changing it.
 - This is our place. We need to be very sure of what we’re doing with the art.
 - We want this art project to have a future, to be able to have other elements added.
 - I like “The Eddy”, but there is certainly a concern that the cut-out nature of the art could lead to children or adults getting fingers, limbs or heads caught in the in-between places.
 - Maybe we could just fill in “The Eddy” with resin and then back light it.
 - If we can’t afford lights now, they could always be added later.
 - We definitely want to have color with “The Eddy”.
 - My favorite piece of art changes with the seasons, and that’s “The Interurban” in Fremont.
 - Can we get any closer to the street than we are now?
 - The northwest corner of the gym could be problematic for the placement of art in that window because of the setting sun. There was a general discussion about whether or not it was possible to move the art to the southern entrance. Nikki said she would talk to Miller | Hull about this possibility.

- There was a general discussion among the group about whether or not the art for the community center could or should be interactive like “The Interurban”. Many members of the PAT said they would like to see interactivity. Nikki said she wasn’t sure if she would want her piece to have the sort of interactivity that “The Interurban” has. She said she’d have to think about it.
- The group decided that they couldn’t decide which one of the alternatives they liked best. Ultimately the group decided that they wanted to see “The Eddy” and “Flock Together” fleshed out more. The group agreed to meet again on Jan. 5, 2004 to review those two proposals in more detail.
- Nikki pointed out the importance of getting through this portion of the project soon. She has a clause in her contract that says she needs to have construction documents done by April 15, 2004. With the PAT needing more developed art ideas, Nikki noted that she wasn’t sure she could make this deadline. The PAT members asked Marcia and Tim if Nikki could have more time in her contract. They agreed that that was possible, and will amend her contract accordingly if need be.

8:45 p.m Review and discussion of updated site plan

- Tim took this opportunity to highlight the issues and questions related to the initial schematic review phase. Designers used the following comments to make changes to the schematic design.

Comments from the Parks Pro-View reviewing committee:

- Adequate separation between 5th Avenue and the multi-use Open Space area is needed to address potential safety issue between users and cars in the street. This issue also was identified at the public meeting and in the PAT.
- We should maximize storage opportunities beyond what is required in the program for the community center. This issue also was identified by the PAT.
- The design team needs to re-evaluate, and possibly redesign, the footprint and the landscape area for the Library expansion in order to reduce impact to the Park, maintain the 5th Avenue entrance to the community center and minimize disruption and redesign of the site. These also were major issues identified by the PAT, the Design Commission and at the public meeting.
- There is concern that the shared boiler will result in excessive financial and operation burden on Parks.

- Parks Pro View raised the concern that the landing on the long hallway in the community center will create congestions (choke point). This same issue was raised by the PAT and at the public meeting.
- Concern was raised about the windows in the northwest corner of the gym. This window placement might create glare. This issue also was identified by the PAT.
- Paths need to be a maximum of 8 feet in width. Confirmation of comments made by the Parks Superintendent regarding paths not allowing use by vehicles which could translate to maximum path width of 5 feet.
- Concern was raised about the conflict between the south community center entrance and the use of the patio as an out door extension of the multi-purpose room. The small size of the patio was also an issue. This concern also was identified by the PAT.
- A concern was raised as to whether a vestibule was needed for the north entrance of the community center in order to accommodate double doors and an interior door. The same issue may also apply to the south entrance in conjunction with changing the orientation of the door opening from south to west.
- Concern was expressed that the lawn area needed to be expanded by refining the paths and reducing adjacent paving. This concern also was expressed by the PAT and one member of the Design Commission.
- Concern was expressed that the outfall of the south storm filtration pond into the underground retention pipes was insufficient and might result in overflows over the south bank.
- Concern was raised regarding the visibility of the play area. This issue was also expressed by the PAT and Design Commission.
- Corners of the south storm filtration pond need to be rounded to provide vehicle access.
- Dumpster area needs to be accessible to the large packer trucks.
- Concern was expressed that a second play area was being created for the child care space and that possibly a fragment garden might be a substitute.
- A number of questions have been posed which are attached for review and responses related to the community center.

Comments from the Project Advisory Team:

- Concern was raised regarding the ration of compact vehicle parking spaces versus full size vehicle parking spaces -- with too many spaces being allocated for compact cars.
- Are there sufficient ADA stalls. Three are shown on the plan. Is that enough?
- Will the audiovisual equipment in the multi-purpose room include a screen?
- There needs to be a power outlet at the south end of the lawn area to support the use of a stage with light and audiovisual equipment.
- Will the community center have internet accessibility throughout?
- Concern was raised regarding the need for fencing around the play area adjacent to the east and south banks of the site.
- Concern was raised about a potential safety issue with the rain garden.
- Concern was raised about how to deal with skateboarders, especially related to the seating walls.
- Concern was raised about a potential problem with ventilation for the back offices.
- The need for seating at the north community center entrance inside the building was noted, given the need for people who wait inside for rides.

Comments from the Public Meeting:

- Concern was expressed that light levels be adequate enough to provide both on-street lighting and in-Park lighting for public events.
- A question was proposed about whether the median in the parking area could be depressed rather than elevated to provide additional opportunity for pervious surface stormwater infiltration.
- There was a concern that the library building was not tall enough. This was also identified as a concern at the Design Commission.

Design Commission Comments: Minutes from the November Design Commission meeting are not yet available. City Design has indicated the minutes will be available soon.

- The Miller | Hull Partnership responded to as many of these concerns as possible. The resulting changes are as follows:
 - The play area was moved from the south end to the north end. The two play areas were combined into one.

- The community center was moved further south, putting the multi-purpose room further south so that it looks out onto the southern slope and over the canopy of trees.
- The number of paths were reduced, as was the width of the paths.
- The two detention areas were combined, increasing the size of the Rain Garden on the west side of the community center.
- The seating wall area on the western edge of the park was changed. The seating areas are now offset, creating more of a safety barrier. In addition, designers plan to use the slope of the lot to create more drop between the sidewalk and the park – again, creating more of a safety barrier.
- The south patio is separated from the patio, and the patio has increased in size.
- With these changes, the library expansion would not necessitate moving the existing access to the community center.
- The changes have resulted in increases in square footage. All proposed square footage increases are subject to budgetary constraints. Proposed square footage increases are as follows:
 - Open space increased from 14,000 square feet to 18,000 square feet.
 - The south patio increased from 1,100 square feet to 1,600 square feet.
 - The play area was increased from 5,200 square feet to 5,300 square feet.
 - The plaza increased in size from 5,000 square feet to 6,600 square feet.

9 p.m Wrap up

- The group will meet again on Jan. 5, 2004 to see revised drawings of “The Eddy” and “Flock Together”.
- The PAT will then determine if it’s possible for Nikki to present her plans to the Public Art Committee on Jan. 20, 2004.
- We will have a regular PAT public meeting on Jan. 26, 2004 at 7 p.m.

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